# Zionism and the Third Reich

By *Mark Weber*

Early in 1935, a passenger ship bound for Haifa in Palestine left the German port of Bremerhaven. Its stern bore the Hebrew letters for its name, "Tel Aviv," while a swastika banner fluttered from the mast. And although the ship was Zionist-owned, its captain was a National Socialist Party member. Many years later a traveler aboard the ship recalled this symbolic combination as a "metaphysical absurdity."/1 Absurd or not, this is but one vignette from a little-known chapter of history: The wide-ranging collaboration between Zionism and Hitler's Third Reich.

**Common Aims**

Over the years, people in many different countries have wrestled with the "Jewish question": that is, what is the proper role of Jews in non-Jewish society? During the 1930s, Jewish Zionists and German National Socialists shared similar views on how to deal with this perplexing issue. They agreed that Jews and Germans were distinctly different nationalities, and that Jews did not belong in Germany. Jews living in the Reich were therefore to be regarded not as "Germans of the Jewish faith," but rather as members of a separate national community. Zionism (Jewish nationalism) also implied an obligation by Zionist Jews to resettle in Palestine, the "Jewish homeland." They could hardly regard themselves as sincere Zionists and simultaneously claim equal rights in Germany or any other "foreign" country.

Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), the founder of modern Zionism, maintained that anti-Semitism is not an aberration, but a natural and completely understandable response by non-Jews to alien Jewish behavior and attitudes. The only solution, he argued, is for Jews to recognize reality and live in a separate state of their own. "The Jewish question exists wherever Jews live in noticeable numbers," he wrote in his most influential work, *The Jewish State*. "Where it does not exist, it is brought in by arriving Jews ... I believe I understand anti-Semitism, which is a very complex phenomenon. I consider this development as a Jew, without hate or fear." The Jewish question, he maintained, is not social or religious. "It is a national question. To solve it we must, above all, make it an international political issue ..." Regardless of their citizenship, Herzl insisted, Jews constitute not merely a religious community, but a nationality, a people, a *Volk*. /2 Zionism, wrote Herzl, offered the world a welcome "final solution of the Jewish question."/3

Six months after Hitler came to power, the Zionist Federation of Germany (by far the largest Zionist group in the country) submitted a detailed memorandum to the new government that reviewed German-Jewish relations and formally offered Zionist support in "solving" the vexing "Jewish question." The first step, it suggested, had to be a frank recognition of fundamental national differences: /4

> Zionism has no illusions about the difficulty of the Jewish condition, which consists above all in an abnormal occupational pattern and in the fault of an intellectual and moral posture not rooted in one's own tradition. Zionism recognized decades ago

moral posture not rooted in one's own tradition. Zionism recognized decades ago that as a result of the assimilationist trend, symptoms of deterioration were bound to appear …

Zionism believes that the rebirth of the national life of a people, which is now occurring in Germany through the emphasis on its Christian and national character, must also come about in the Jewish national group. For the Jewish people, too, national origin, religion, common destiny and a sense of its uniqueness must be of decisive importance in the shaping of its existence. This means that the egotistical individualism of the liberal era must be overcome and replaced with a sense of community and collective responsibility …

We believe it is precisely the new [National Socialist] Germany that can, through bold resoluteness in the handling of the Jewish question, take a decisive step toward overcoming a problem which, in truth, will have to be dealt with by most European peoples …

Our acknowledgment of Jewish nationality provides for a clear and sincere relationship to the German people and its national and racial realities. Precisely because we do not wish to falsify these fundamentals, because we, too, are against mixed marriage and are for maintaining the purity of the Jewish group and reject any trespasses in the cultural domain, we — having been brought up in the German language and German culture — can show an interest in the works and values of German culture with admiration and internal sympathy …

For its practical aims, Zionism hopes to be able to win the collaboration of even a government fundamentally hostile to Jews, because in dealing with the Jewish question not sentimentalities are involved but a real problem whose solution interests all peoples and at the present moment especially the German people …

Boycott propaganda — such as is currently being carried on against Germany in many ways — is in essence un-Zionist, because Zionism wants not to do battle but to convince and to build …

We are not blind to the fact that a Jewish question exists and will continue to exist. From the abnormal situation of the Jews severe disadvantages result for them, but also scarcely tolerable conditions for other peoples.

The Federation's paper, the *Jüdische Rundschau* ("Jewish Review"), proclaimed the same message: "Zionism recognizes the existence of a Jewish problem and desires a far-reaching and constructive solution. For this purpose Zionism wishes to obtain the assistance of all peoples, whether pro- or anti-Jewish, because, in its view, we are dealing here with a concrete rather than a sentimental problem, the

Jewish, because, in its view, we are dealing here with a concrete rather than a sentimental problem, the solution of which all peoples are interested."/5 A young Berlin rabbi, Joachim Prinz, who later settled in the United States and became head of the American Jewish Congress, wrote in his 1934 book, Wir Juden ("We Jews"), that the National Socialist revolution in Germany meant "Jewry for the Jews." He explained: "No subterfuge can save us now. In place of assimilation we desire a new concept: recognition of the Jewish nation and Jewish race." /6

**Active Collaboration**

On this basis of their similar ideologies about ethnicity and nationhood, National Socialists and Zionists worked together for what each group believed was in its own national interest. As a result, the Hitler government vigorously supported Zionism and Jewish emigration to Palestine from 1933 until 1940-1941, when the Second World War prevented extensive collaboration.

Even as the Third Reich became more entrenched, many German Jews, probably a majority, continued to regard themselves, often with considerable pride, as Germans first. Few were enthusiastic about pulling up roots to begin a new life in far-away Palestine. Nevertheless, more and more German Jews turned to Zionism during this period. Until late 1938, the Zionist movement flourished in Germany under Hitler. The circulation of the Zionist Federation's bi-weekly *Jüdische Rundschau* grew enormously. Numerous Zionist books were published. "Zionist work was in full swing" in Germany during those years, the Encyclopaedia Judaica notes. A Zionist convention held in Berlin in 1936 reflected "in its composition the vigorous party life of German Zionists."/7

The SS was particularly enthusiastic in its support for Zionism. An internal June 1934 SS position paper urged active and wide-ranging support for Zionism by the government and the Party as the best way to encourage emigration of Germany's Jews to Palestine. This would require increased Jewish self-awareness. Jewish schools, Jewish sports leagues, Jewish cultural organizations — in short, everything that would encourage this new consciousness and self-awareness – should be promoted, the paper recommended. /8

SS officer Leopold von Mildenstein and Zionist Federation official Kurt Tuchler toured Palestine together for six months to assess Zionist development there. Based on his firsthand observations, von Mildenstein wrote a series of twelve illustrated articles for the important Berlin daily *Der Angriff* that appeared in late 1934 under the heading "A Nazi Travels to Palestine." The series expressed great admiration for the pioneering spirit and achievements of the Jewish settlers. Zionist self-development, von Mildenstein wrote, had produced a new kind of Jew. He praised Zionism as a great benefit for both the Jewish people and the entire world. A Jewish homeland in Palestine, he wrote in his concluding article, "pointed the way to curing a centuries-long wound on the body of the world: the Jewish question." *Der Angriff* issued a special medal, with a Swastika on one side and a Star of David on the other, to commemorate the joint SS-Zionist visit. A few months after the articles appeared, von Mildenstein was promoted to head the Jewish affairs department of the SS security service in order to support Zionist migration and development more effectively. /9

The official SS newspaper, *Das Schwarze Korps*, proclaimed its support for Zionism in a May 1935 front-page editorial: "The time may not be too far off when Palestine will again be able to receive its sons who have been lost to it for more than a thousand years. Our good wishes, together with official goodwill, go with them."/10 Four months later, a similar article appeared in the SS paper: /11

> The recognition of Jewry as a racial community based on blood and not on religion leads the German government to guarantee without reservation the racial separateness of this community. The government finds itself in complete agreement with the great spiritual movement within Jewry, the so-called Zionism, with its recognition of the solidarity of Jewry around the world and its rejection of all assimilationist notions. On this basis, Germany undertakes measures that will surely play a significant role in the future in the handling of the Jewish problem around the world.

A leading German shipping line began direct passenger liner service from Hamburg to Haifa, Palestine, in October 1933 providing "strictly kosher food on its ships, under the supervision of the Hamburg rabbinate." /12

With official backing, Zionists worked tirelessly to "reeducate" Germany's Jews. As American historian Francis Nicosia put it in his 1985 survey, The Third Reich and the Palestine Question: "Zionists were encouraged to take their message to the Jewish community, to collect money, to show films on Palestine and generally to educate German Jews about Palestine. There was considerable pressure to teach Jews in Germany to cease identifying themselves as Germans and to awaken a new Jewish national identity in them." /13

In an interview after the war, the former head of the Zionist Federation of Germany, Dr. Hans Friedenthal, summed up the situation: "The Gestapo did everything in those days to promote emigration, particularly to Palestine. We often received their help when we required anything from other authorities regarding preparations for emigration." /14

At the September 1935 National Socialist Party Congress, the Reichstag adopted the so-called "Nuremberg laws" that prohibited marriages and sexual relations between Jews and Germans and, in effect, proclaimed the Jews an alien minority nationality. A few days later the Zionist *Jüdische Rundschau* editorially welcomed the new measures: /15

> Germany ... is meeting the demands of the World Zionist Congress when it declares the Jews now living in Germany to be a national minority. Once the Jews have been stamped a national minority it is again possible to establish normal relations between the German nation and Jewry. The new laws give the Jewish minority in

> Germany its own cultural life, its own national life. In future it will be able to shape its own schools, its own theatre, and its own sports associations. In short, it can create its own future in all aspects of national life ...
>
> Germany has given the Jewish minority the opportunity to live for itself, and is offering state protection for this separate life of the Jewish minority: Jewry's process of growth into a nation will thereby be encouraged and a contribution will be made to the establishment of more tolerable relations between the two nations.

Georg Kareski, the head of both the "Revisionist" Zionist State Organization and the Jewish Cultural League, and former head of the Berlin Jewish Community, declared in an interview with the Berlin daily Der Angriff at the end of 1935: /16

> For many years I have regarded a complete separation of the cultural affairs of the two peoples [Jews and Germans] as a pre-condition for living together without conflict... I have long supported such a separation, provided it is founded on respect for the alien nationality. The Nuremberg Laws ... seem to me, apart from their legal provisions, to conform entirely with this desire for a separate life based on mutual respect... This interruption of the process of dissolution in many Jewish communities, which had been promoted through mixed marriages, is therefore, from a Jewish point of view, entirely welcome.

Zionist leaders in other countries echoed these views. Stephen S. Wise, president of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress, told a New York rally in June 1938: "I am not an American citizen of the Jewish faith, I am a Jew... Hitler was right in one thing. He calls the Jewish people a race and we are a race." /17

The Interior Ministry's Jewish affairs specialist, Dr. Bernhard Lösener, expressed support for Zionism in an article that appeared in a November 1935 issue of the official Reichsverwaltungsblatt: /18

> If the Jews already had their own state in which the majority of them were settled, then the Jewish question could be regarded as completely resolved today, also for the Jews themselves. The least amount of opposition to the ideas underlying the Nuremberg Laws have been shown by the Zionists, because they realize at once that these laws represent the only correct solution for the Jewish people as well. For each nation must have its own state as the outward expression of its particular nationhood.

In cooperation with the German authorities, Zionist groups organized a network of some forty camps and agricultural centers throughout Germany where prospective settlers were trained for their new lives in Palestine. Although the Nuremberg Laws forbid Jews from displaying the German flag, Jews were specifically guaranteed the right to display the blue and white Jewish national banner. The flag that would one day be adopted by Israel was flown at the Zionist camps and centers in Hitler's Germany. /19

Himmler's security service cooperated with the Haganah, the Zionist underground military organization in Palestine. The SS agency paid Haganah official Feivel Polkes for information about the situation in Palestine and for help in directing Jewish emigration to that country. Meanwhile, the Haganah was kept well informed about German plans by a spy it managed to plant in the Berlin headquarters of the SS. /20 Haganah-SS collaboration even included secret deliveries of German weapons to Jewish settlers for use in clashes with Palestinian Arabs. /21

In the aftermath of the November 1938 "Kristallnacht" outburst of violence and destruction, the SS quickly helped the Zionist organization to get back on its feet and continue its work in Germany, although now under more restricted supervision. /22

**Official Reservations**

German support for Zionism was not unlimited. Government and Party officials were very mindful of the continuing campaign by powerful Jewish communities in the United States, Britain and other countries to mobilize "their" governments and fellow citizens against Germany. As long as world Jewry remained implacably hostile toward National Socialist Germany, and as long as the great majority of Jews around the world showed little eagerness to resettle in the Zionist "promised land," a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine would not really "solve" the international Jewish question. Instead, German officials reasoned, it would immeasurably strengthen this dangerous anti-German campaign. German backing for Zionism was therefore limited to support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine under British control, not a sovereign Jewish state. /23

A Jewish state in Palestine, the Foreign Minister informed diplomats in June 1937, would not be in Germany's interest because it would not be able to absorb all Jews around the world, but would only serve as an additional power base for international Jewry, in much the same way as Moscow served as a base for international Communism. /24 Reflecting something of a shift in official policy, the German press expressed much greater sympathy in 1937 for Palestinian Arab resistance to Zionist ambitions, at a time when tension and conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine was sharply increasing. /25

A Foreign Office circular bulletin of June 22, 1937, cautioned that in spite of support for Jewish settlement in Palestine, "it would nevertheless be a mistake to assume that Germany supports the formation of a state structure in Palestine under some form of Jewish control. In view of the anti-German agitation of international Jewry, Germany cannot agree that the formation of a Palestine Jewish state would help the peaceful development of the nations of the world."/26 "The proclamation of a Jewish state or a Jewish-administrated Palestine," warned an internal memorandum by the Jewish

Jewish state of a Jewish-administrated Palestine," warned an internal memorandum by the Jewish affairs section of the SS, "would create for Germany a new enemy, one that would have a deep influence on developments in the Near East." Another SS agency predicted that a Jewish state "would work to bring special minority protection to Jews in every country, therefore giving legal protection to the exploitation activity of world Jewry."/27 In January 1939, Hitler's new Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, likewise warned in another circular bulletin that "Germany must regard the formation of a Jewish state as dangerous" because it "would bring an international increase in power to world Jewry." /28

Hitler himself personally reviewed this entire issue in early 1938 and, in spite of his long-standing skepticism of Zionist ambitions and misgivings that his policies might contribute to the formation of a Jewish state, decided to support Jewish migration to Palestine even more vigorously. The prospect of ridding Germany of its Jews, he concluded, outweighed the possible dangers. /29

Meanwhile, the British government imposed ever more drastic restrictions on Jewish immigration into Palestine in 1937, 1938 and 1939. In response, the SS security service concluded a secret alliance with the clandestine Zionist agency Mossad le-Aliya Bet to smuggle Jews illegally into Palestine. As a result of this intensive collaboration, several convoys of ships succeeded in reaching Palestine past British gunboats. Jewish migration, both legal and illegal, from Germany (including Austria) to Palestine increased dramatically in 1938 and 1939. Another 10,000 Jews were scheduled to depart in October 1939, but the outbreak of war in September brought the effort to an end. All the same, German authorities continued to promote indirect Jewish emigration to Palestine during 1940 and 1941. /30 Even as late as March 1942, at least one officially authorized Zionist "kibbutz" training camp for potential emigrants continued to operate in Hitler's Germany. /31

**The Transfer Agreement**

The centerpiece of German-Zionist cooperation during the Hitler era was the Transfer Agreement, a pact that enabled tens of thousands of German Jews to migrate to Palestine with their wealth. The Agreement, also known as the Haavara (Hebrew for "transfer"), was concluded in August 1933 following talks between German officials and Chaim Arlosoroff, Political Secretary of the Jewish Agency, the Palestine center of the World Zionist Organization. /32

Through this unusual arrangement, each Jew bound for Palestine deposited money in a special account in Germany. The money was used to purchase German-made agricultural tools, building materials, pumps, fertilizer, and so forth, which were exported to Palestine and sold there by the Jewish-owned Haavara company in Tel-Aviv. Money from the sales was given to the Jewish emigrant upon his arrival in Palestine in an amount corresponding to his deposit in Germany. German goods poured into Palestine through the Haavara, which was supplemented a short time later with a barter agreement by which Palestine oranges were exchanged for German timber, automobiles, agricultural machinery, and other goods. The Agreement thus served the Zionist aim of bringing Jewish settlers and development capital to Palestine, while simultaneously serving the German goal of freeing the country of an unwanted alien

group.

Delegates at the 1933 Zionist Congress in Prague vigorously debated the merits of the Agreement. Some feared that the pact would undermine the international Jewish economic boycott against Germany. But Zionist officials reassured the Congress. Sam Cohen, a key figure behind the Haavara arrangement, stressed that the Agreement was not economically advantageous to Germany. Arthur Ruppin, a Zionist Organization emigration specialist who had helped negotiate the pact, pointed out that "the Transfer Agreement in no way interfered with the boycott movement, since no new currency will flow into Germany as a result of the agreement…" /33 The 1935 Zionist Congress, meeting in Switzerland, overwhelmingly endorsed the pact. In 1936, the Jewish Agency (the Zionist "shadow government" in Palestine) took over direct control of the Ha'avara, which remained in effect until the Second World War forced its abandonment.

Some German officials opposed the arrangement. Germany's Consul General in Jerusalem, Hans Döhle, for example, sharply criticized the Agreement on several occasions during 1937. He pointed out that it cost Germany the foreign exchange that the products exported to Palestine through the pact would bring if sold elsewhere. The Haavara monopoly sale of German goods to Palestine through a Jewish agency naturally angered German businessmen and Arabs there. Official German support for Zionism could lead to a loss of German markets throughout the Arab world. The British government also resented the arrangement. /34 A June 1937 German Foreign Office internal bulletin referred to the "foreign exchange sacrifices" that resulted from the Haavara. 3/5

A December 1937 internal memorandum by the German Interior Ministry reviewed the impact of the Transfer Agreement: "There is no doubt that the Haavara arrangement has contributed most significantly to the very rapid development of Palestine since 1933. The Agreement provided not only the largest source of money (from Germany!), but also the most intelligent group of immigrants, and finally it brought to the country the machines and industrial products essential for development." The main advantage of the pact, the memo reported, was the emigration of large numbers of Jews to Palestine, the most desirable target country as far as Germany was concerned. But the paper also noted the important drawbacks pointed out by Consul Döhle and others. The Interior Minister, it went on, had concluded that the disadvantages of the agreement now outweighed the advantages and that, therefore, it should be terminated. /36

Only one man could resolve the controversy. Hitler personally reviewed the policy in July and September 1937, and again in January 1938, and each time decided to maintain the Haavara arrangement. The goal of removing Jews from Germany, he concluded, justified the drawbacks. /37

The Reich Economics Ministry helped to organize another transfer company, the International Trade and Investment Agency, or Intria, through which Jews in foreign countries could help German Jews emigrate to Palestine. Almost $900,000 was eventually channeled through the Intria to German Jews in Palestine. /38 Other European countries eager to encourage Jewish emigration concluded agreements with the Zionists modeled after the Ha'avara. In 1937 Poland authorized the Halifin (Hebrew for

"exchange") transfer company. By late summer 1939, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary and Italy had signed similar arrangements. The outbreak of war in September 1939, however, prevented large-scale implementation of these agreements. /39

**Achievements of Haavara**

Between 1933 and 1941, some 60,000 German Jews emigrated to Palestine through the Ha'avara and other German-Zionist arrangements, or about ten percent of Germany's 1933 Jewish population. (These German Jews made up about 15 percent of Palestine's 1939 Jewish population.) Some Ha'avara emigrants transferred considerable personal wealth from Germany to Palestine. As Jewish historian Edwin Black has noted: "Many of these people, especially in the late 1930s, were allowed to transfer actual replicas of their homes and factories — indeed rough replicas of their very existence."/40

The total amount transferred from Germany to Palestine through the Ha'avara between August 1933 and the end of 1939 was 8.1 million pounds or 139.57 million German marks (then equivalent to more than $40 million). This amount included 33.9 million German marks ($13.8 million) provided by the Reichsbank in connection with the Agreement. /41

Historian Black has estimated that an additional $70 million may have flowed into Palestine through corollary German commercial agreements and special international banking transactions. The German funds had a major impact on a country as underdeveloped as Palestine was in the 1930s, he pointed out. Several major industrial enterprises were built with the capital from Germany, including the Mekoroth waterworks and the Lodzia textile firm. The influx of Ha'avara goods and capital, concluded Black, "produced an economic explosion in Jewish Palestine" and was "an indispensable factor in the creation of the State of Israel."/42

The Ha'avara agreement greatly contributed to Jewish development in Palestine and thus, indirectly, to the foundation of the Israeli state. A January 1939 German Foreign Office circular bulletin reported, with some misgiving, that "the transfer of Jewish property out of Germany [through the Ha'avara agreement] contributed to no small extent to the building of a Jewish state in Palestine."/43

Former officials of the Ha'avara company in Palestine confirmed this view in a detailed study of the Transfer Agreement published in 1972: "The economic activity made possible by the influx German capital and the Haavara transfers to the private and public sectors were of greatest importance for the country's development. Many new industries and commercial enterprises were established in Jewish Palestine, and numerous companies that are enormously important even today in the economy of the State of Israel owe their existence to the Haavara."/44 Dr. Ludwig Pinner, a Ha'avara company official in Tel Aviv during the 1930s, later commented that the exceptionally competent Ha'avara immigrants "decisively contributed" to the economic, social, cultural and educational development of Palestine's Jewish community. /45

The Transfer Agreement was the most far-reaching example of cooperation between Hitler's Germany

and international Zionism. Through this pact, Hitler's Third Reich did more than any other government during the 1930s to support Jewish development in Palestine.

**Zionists Offer a Military Alliance With Hitler**

In early January 1941 a small but important Zionist organization submitted a formal proposal to German diplomats in Beirut for a military-political alliance with wartime Germany. The offer was made by the radical underground "Fighters for the Freedom of Israel," better known as the Lehi or Stern Gang. Its leader, Avraham Stern, had recently broken with the radical nationalist "National Military Organization" (Irgun Zvai Leumi) over the group's attitude toward Britain, which had effectively banned further Jewish settlement of Palestine. Stern regarded Britain as the main enemy of Zionism.

This remarkable Zionist proposal "for the solution of the Jewish question in Europe and the active participation of the NMO [Lehi] in the war on the side of Germany" is worth quoting at some length: /46

> In their speeches and statements, the leading statesmen of National Socialist Germany have often emphasized that a New Order in Europe requires as a prerequisite a radical solution of the Jewish question by evacuation. ("Jew-free Europe")
>
> The evacuation of the Jewish masses from Europe is a precondition for solving the Jewish question. However, the only way this can be totally achieved is through settlement of these masses in the homeland of the Jewish people, Palestine, and by the establishment of a Jewish state in its historical boundaries.
>
> The goal of the political activity and the years of struggle by the Israel Freedom Movement, the National Military Organization in Palestine (Irgun Zvai Leumi), is to solve the Jewish problem in this way and thus completely liberate the Jewish people forever.
>
> The NMO, which is very familiar with the good will of the German Reich government and its officials towards Zionist activities within Germany and the Zionist emigration program, takes that view that:
>
> 1. Common interests can exist between a European New Order based on the German concept and the true national aspirations of the Jewish people as embodied by the NMO.
>
> 2. Cooperation is possible between the New Germany and a renewed, folkish-national Jewry [Hebräertum].
>
> 3. The establishment of the historical Jewish state on a national and totalitarian

> basis, and bound by treaty with the German Reich, would be in the interest of maintaining and strengthening the future German position of power in the Near East.
>
> On the basis of these considerations, and upon the condition that the German Reich government recognize the national aspirations of the Israel Freedom Movement mentioned above, the NMO in Palestine offers to actively take part in the war on the side of Germany.
>
> This offer by the NMO could include military, political and informational activity within Palestine and, after certain organizational measures, outside as well. Along with this the Jewish men of Europe would be militarily trained and organized in military units under the leadership and command of the NMO. They would take part in combat operations for the purpose of conquering Palestine, should such a front by formed.
>
> The indirect participation of the Israel Freedom Movement in the New Order of Europe, already in the preparatory stage, combined with a positive-radical solution of the European Jewish problem on the basis of the national aspirations of the Jewish people mentioned above, would greatly strengthen the moral foundation of the New Order in the eyes of all humanity.
>
> The cooperation of the Israel Freedom Movement would also be consistent with a recent speech by the German Reich Chancellor, in which Hitler stressed that he would utilize any combination and coalition in order to isolate and defeat England.

There is no record of any German response. Acceptance was very unlikely anyway because by this time German policy was decisively pro-Arab. /47 Remarkably, Stern's group sought to conclude a pact with the Third Reich at a time when stories that Hitler was bent on exterminating Jews were already in wide circulation. Stern apparently either did not believe the stories or he was willing to collaborate with the mortal enemy of his people to help bring about a Jewish state. /48

An important Lehi member at the time the group made this offer was Yitzhak Shamir, who later served as Israel's Foreign Minister and then, during much of the 1980s and until June 1992, as Prime Minister. As Lehi operations chief following Stern's death in 1942, Shamir organized numerous acts of terror, including the November 1944 assassination of British Middle East Minister Lord Moyne and the September 1948 slaying of Swedish United Nations mediator Count Bernadotte. Years later, when Shamir was asked about the 1941 offer, he confirmed that he was aware of his organization's proposed alliance with wartime Germany. /49

**Conclusion**

In spite of the basic hostility between the Hitler regime and international Jewry, for several years Jewish Zionist and German National Socialist interests coincided. In collaborating with the Zionists for a mutually desirable and humane solution to a complex problem, the Third Reich was willing to make foreign exchange sacrifices, impair relations with Britain and anger the Arabs. Indeed, during the 1930s no nation did more to substantively further Jewish-Zionist goals than Hitler's Germany.

**Notes**

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11. *as Schwarze Korps*, Sept. 26, 1935. Quoted in: F. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (1985), pp. 56-57.

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13. F. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (1985), p. 60. See also: F. Nicosia, "The Yishuv and the Holocaust," *The Journal of Modern History* (Chicago), Vol. 64, No. 3, Sept. 1992, pp. 533-540.

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18. F. Nicosia, *The Third Reich* (1985), p. 53.

19. Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews*, 1933-1945 (New York: Bantam, pb., 1976), pp. 253-254.; Max Nussbaum, "Zionism Under Hitler," *Congress Weekly* (New York: American Jewish Congress), Sept. 11, 1942.; F. Nicosia, *The Third Reich* (1985), pp. 58-60, 217.; Edwin Black, *The Transfer Agreement* (1984), p. 175.

20. H. Höhne, *The Order of the Death's Head* (Ballantine, pb., 1984), pp. 380-382.; K. Schleunes, *Twisted Road* (1970, 1990), p. 226.; Secret internal SS intelligence report about F. Polkes, June 17, 1937, in: John Mendelsohn, ed., *The Holocaust* (New York: Garland, 1982), vol. 5, pp. 62-64.

21. F. Nicosia, *Third Reich* (1985), pp. 63-64, 105, 219-220.

22. F. Nicosia, *Third Reich* (1985), p. 160.

23. This distinction is also implicit in the "Balfour Declaration" of November 1917, in which the British government expressed support for "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, while carefully avoiding any mention of a Jewish state. Referring to the majority Arab population there, the Declaration went on to caution, "…it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the

civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." The complete text of the Declaration is reproduced in facsimile in: Robert John, Behind the Balfour Declaration (IHR, 1988), p. 32.

24. F. Nicosia, *Third Reich* (1985), p. 121.

25. F. Nicosia, *Third Reich* (1985), p. 124.

26. David Yisraeli, *The Palestine Problem in German Politics 1889-1945* (Bar-Ilan University, Israel, 1974), p. 300.; Also in: *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D, Vol. 5. Doc. No. 564 or 567.

27. K. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road* (1970, 1990), p. 209.

28. Circular of January 25, 1939. Nuremberg document 3358-PS. International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal* (Nuremberg: 1947-1949), vol. 32, pp. 242-243. *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington, DC: 1946-1948), vol. 6, pp. 92-93.

29. F. Nicosia, *Third Reich* (1985), pp. 141-144.; On Hitler's critical view of Zionism in *Mein Kampf*, see esp. Vol. 1, Chap. 11. Quoted in: Robert Wistrich, *Hitler's Apocalypse* (London: 1985), p. 155.; See also: F. Nicosia, *Third Reich* (1985), pp. 26-28.; Hitler told his army adjutant in 1939 and again in 1941 that he had asked the British in 1937 about transferring all of Germany's Jews to Palestine or Egypt. The British rejected the proposal, he said, because it would cause further disorder. See: H. v. Kotze, ed., *Heeresadjutant bei Hitler* (Stuttgart: 1974), pp. 65, 95.

30. F. Nicosia, *Third Reich* (1985), pp. 156, 160-164, 166-167.; H. Höhne, *The Order of the Death's Head* (Ballantine, pb., 1984), pp. 392-394.; Jon and David Kimche, *The Secret Roads* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1955), pp. 39-43. See also: David Yisraeli, "The Third Reich and Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies*, October 1971, p. 347.; Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, 1939-1945 (1979), pp. 43, 49, 52, 60.; T. Kelly, "Man who fooled Nazis," *Washington Times*, April 28, 1987, pp. 1B, 4B. Based on interview with Willy Perl, author of The Holocaust Conspiracy.

31. Y. Arad, et al., eds., *Documents On the Holocaust* (1981), p. 155. (The training kibbutz was at Neuendorf, and may have functioned even after March 1942.)

32. On the Agreement in general, see: Werner Feilchenfeld, et al., *Haavara-Transfer nach Palaestina* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1972).; David Yisraeli, "The Third Reich and the Transfer Agreement," *Journal of Contemporary History* (London), No. 2, 1971, pp. 129-148.; "Haavara," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1971), vol. 7, pp. 1012-1013.; F. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (Austin: 1985), pp. 44-49.; Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985), pp. 140-141.; *The Transfer Agreement*, by Edwin Black, is detailed and useful. However, it contains numerous inaccuracies and wildly erroneous conclusions. See, for example, the review by Richard S. Levy in *Commentary*, Sept. 1984, pp. 68-71.

33. E. Black, *The Transfer Agreement* (1984), pp. 328, 337.

34. On opposition to the Haavara in official German circles, see: W. Feilchenfeld, et al., *Haavara-Transfer nach Palaestina* (1972), pp. 31-33.; D. Yisraeli, "The Third Reich," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1971, pp. 136-139.; F. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question*, pp. 126-139.; I. Weckert, *Feuerzeichen* (1981), pp. 226-227.; Rolf Vogel, *Ein Stempel hat gefehlt* (Munich: Droemer Knaur, 1977), pp. 110 ff.

35. W. Feilchenfeld, et al., *Haavara-Transfer* (1972), p. 31. Entire text in: David Yisraeli, *The Palestine Problem in German Politics 1889-1945* (Israel: 1974), pp. 298-300.

36. Interior Ministry internal memo (signed by State Secretary W. Stuckart), Dec. 17, 1937, in: Helmut Eschwege, ed., *Kennzeichen J* (Berlin: 1966), pp. 132-136.

37. W. Feilchenfeld, et al, *Haavara-Transfer* (1972), p. 32.

38. E. Black, *Transfer Agreement*, pp. 376-377.

39. E. Black, *Transfer Agreement* (1984), pp. 376, 378.; F. Nicosia, *Third Reich* (1985), pp. 238-239 (n. 91).

40. E. Black, *Transfer Agreement*, p. 379.; F. Nicosia, *Third Reich*, pp. 212, 255 (n. 66).

41. W. Feilchenfeld, et al., *Haavara-Transfer*, p. 75.; "Haavara," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, (1971), Vol. 7, p. 1013.

42. E. Black, *Transfer Agreement*, pp. 379, 373, 382.

43. Circular of January 25, 1939. Nuremberg document 3358-PS. International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal* (Nuremberg: 1947-1949), Vol. 32, pp. 242-243.

44. Werner Feilchenfeld, et al., *Haavara-Transfer nach Palaestina* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1972). Quoted in: Ingrid Weckert, *Feuerzeichen* (Tübingen: Grabert, 1981), pp. 222-223.

45. W. Feilchenfeld, et al., *Haavara-Transfer nach Palaestina*(1972). Quoted in: I. Weckert, *euerzeichen* (1981), p. 224.

46. Original document in German Auswärtiges Amt Archiv, Bestand 47-59, E 224152 and E 234155-58. (Photocopy in author's possession).; Complete original German text published in: David Yisraeli, *The Palestine Problem in German Politics 1889-1945* (Israel: 1974), pp. 315-317. See also: Klaus Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Spring-Summer 1976, pp. 78-80.; (At the time this offer was made, Stern's Lehi group still regarded itself as the true Irgun (NMO.)

offer was made, Stern's Lehi group still regarded itself as the true Irgun/NMO.)

47. Arab nationalists opposed Britain, which then dominated much of the Arab world, including Egypt, Iraq and Palestine. Because Britain and Germany were at war, Germany cultivated Arab support. The leader of Palestine's Arabs, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini, worked closely with Germany during the war years. After escaping from Palestine, he spoke to the Arab world over German radio and helped raise Muslim recruits in Bosnia for the Waffen SS.

48. Israel Shahak, "Yitzhak Shamir, Then and Now," *Middle East Policy* (Washington, DC), Vol. 1, No. 1, (Whole No. 39), 1992, pp. 27-38.; Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Israel's Fateful Hour* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), pp. 213-214. Quoted in: Andrew J. Hurley, *Israel and the New World Order* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: 1991), pp. 93, 208-209.; Avishai Margalit, "The Violent Life of Yitzhak Shamir," *New York Review of Books*, May 14, 1992, pp. 18-24.; Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* (1983), pp. 266-269.; L. Brenner, *Jews in America Today* (1986), pp. 175-177.; L. Brenner, "Yitzhak Shamir: On Hitler's Side," *Arab Perspectives* (League of Arab States), March 1984, pp. 11-13.

49. Avishai Margalit, "The Violent Life of Yitzhak Shamir," *New York Review of Books*, May 14, 1992, pp. 18-24.; Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* (1983), pp. 266-269.; L. Brenner, *Jews in America Today* (1986), pp. 175-177.; L. Brenner, "Skeletons in Shamir's Cupboard," *Middle East International*, Sept. 30, 1983, pp. 15-16.; Sol Stern, L. Rapoport, "Israel's Man of the Shadows," *Village Voice* (New York), July 3, 1984, pp. 13 ff.

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